

New York, NY - Outlining his vision for making solar energy more mainstream in New York and across the country, Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today delivered the keynote address at the second annual New York City Solar Summit. Hinchey gave an overview of the dramatic need for major advancements in solar energy technology and use, highlighted his work to make New York a leader in solar energy research and development through The Solar Energy Consortium (TSEC), and discussed efforts in Congress to pass tax credits and other incentives to help make solar technology more accessible.

"With gas prices over \$4 per gallon, the United States is at an energy tipping point and it is incumbent upon this generation to exhibit the leadership necessary to tip the energy scale in the favor of solar energy," Hinchey said. "We need to create a solar energy-based industrial revolution that will dramatically improve the way in which we live. We are helping to lead this movement here in New York through the establishment of The Solar Energy Consortium -- a new industry-driven, non-profit organization that provides leadership, organization, resources, and support for the establishment of a major solar energy industry cluster in New York. Through this kind of endeavor, we will help lead the U.S. off its dependence on oil, reestablish our country as leader in innovation, revitalize the economy, strengthen national security, and improve the environment. Solar energy truly holds the key to our long-term prosperity as a nation."

The summit presented numerous working sessions that covered topics such as the New York solar market; cutting edge solar research; solar installation case studies from Germany, Spain and China; solar economics and incentives from NREL and the New York Energy Research and Development Authority; working with NYC codes to install solar and more. In addition to Hinchey, speakers included New York Times Columnist Andrew Revkin and New York City Deputy Mayor Edward Skyler.

Hinchey helped organize and create TSEC in upstate New York, which is a new industry-driven, non-profit organization that provides leadership, organization, resources, and support for the establishment of a major solar energy industry cluster in New York. TSEC is the first organization of its kind for the photovoltaic industry, encompassing research and development, manufacturing facilities, industry promotion and market development. Earlier this year, TSEC partnered with its first major manufacturing partner, Prism Solar Technologies, which plans to bring more than 400 new jobs to upstate New York within 4-5 years. TSEC has also partnered with six research universities throughout New York to work on the research needed to improve solar technology.

In order to advance TSEC, Hinchey helped secure \$1.476 million in federal funds to help bring companies such as Prism Solar Technologies into the consortium. The congressman also secured final approval of \$3.2 million for C9 Corporation to conduct solar research and development in conjunction with TSEC. Additionally, Hinchey helped convince Empire State Development to contribute a \$1.5 million grant to attract solar energy companies to TSEC. Subsequently, the recently approved New York State budget includes \$6.5 million for TSEC. Ulster County has also committed \$200,000 to the consortium.

Hinchey also worked very hard to help the House pass an extension of tax incentives for the development and purchase of solar products; speaking on several occasions to Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi to encourage her to help pass the bill. While there have been several versions of the bill, the most recent one, the Renewable Energy and Job Creation Act, is the one Hinchey is pushing the Senate to pass so that it can move to the White House to become law.

That bill focuses aggressively on helping to boost solar energy research and development while also making it more affordable for consumers to purchase solar panels for their homes. The bill extends a 30 percent tax credit on solar products purchased by consumers and doubles the annual cap to \$4,000. The measure also extends the business solar energy tax credit at a level of 30 percent for six years, a long-term action that will spur investments and in turn make solar equipment more competitive and less costly.

"It is incumbent upon those of us in government to ensure that this solar energy revolution takes place here in the United States. We all know full well that companies will leave the U.S. if it's more cost-effective to operate overseas," Hinchey said. "With Germany leading the world in solar energy, we know that we must provide the right blend of tax incentives and regulations to enable the solar energy industry to flourish. As with any crisis, the energy crisis requires strong leadership from our elected officials. It's time for elected officials in Washington, Albany, and across the country to realize that Americans are begging for sound energy policies that go beyond two, four, and six year terms. For far too long, elected officials have been worried about saying whatever will get them reelected rather than focusing on the need to make the dramatic shift from a fossil fuel-based economy to a renewable energy one with solar energy playing the central role."

The Center for Sustainable Energy (CSE), on behalf of the City University of New York (CUNY), the New York City Economic Development Corporation and the Mayor's Office of Long-Term Planning and Sustainability as well as key stakeholders and NYC utilities have developed a strategy to support large-scale solar energy market growth in New York City. As a result, the

U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) named New York City as one of the initial 13 Solar America Cities.

The CSE was established in 2003 at The City University of New York's Bronx Community College campus. The mission of CSE is to promote and implement the use of sustainable and efficient energy technologies in urban communities through education, training, workforce development, research and project facilitation. CSE supports clean energy development and energy conservation as the means to protect the environment, enhance public health and position New York City to capture emerging economic development opportunities in the energy sector.